

Orig SALT

Did Bayh Mislead On SALT Verification?

Sen. Birch Bayh (D.-Ind.), chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, was accused last week of giving the Senate Foreign Relations Committee a grossly distorted version of his panel's findings—all in the interest of pushing SALT II.

The Intelligence Committee's 177-page report is stamped "secret codeword," a classification reserved for unusually sensitive matters. But Bayh's two-day closed-door testimony before the Foreign Relations panel was described by columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak as "highly selective—ignoring the bad news and inflating the good, differing in word and spirit from the committee's findings."

Because the Intelligence Committee's findings are so rigidly classified, even those senators who have followed the burdensome security regulations to read the report cannot take the Senate floor to dispute Bayh.

Sen. John Glenn (D.-Ohio), one of the few senators who has read the report, hotly disputed Bayh's interpretation during his Foreign Relations appearance. But when contacted by Evans-Novak to confirm their information about the report, he could only say:

"Nothing I have read or heard so far takes care of the verification problem, but I cannot even say why because of the high security classification that has been hung on the whole matter. What we have is euphoria based on official statements."

According to Evans-Novak, Bayh never made clear that his panel's secret report states unequivocally that the SALT II protocol (which lasts until Dec. 31, 1981) cannot be verified.

As for the treaty itself, the intelligence panel disputes Administration claims that verification will be easy under the pact. In fact, the report states, "The Soviets could test a new ICBM system with a launch weight as much as 20 to 40 per cent above the SS-19 with less than a 50 per cent chance of detection."

Analyzing what Moscow could do in secret to "break out" of the treaty's limitations, the report declares, "If a covert development were attempted, the Soviets could avoid detection and identifica-

tion of the activity for as long as three years during which some 200 missiles might become operational."

Noting that very few senators have read the Intelligence Committee's super-secret report—available on an eyes-only basis to senators in a closely guarded Senate cubbyhole—Evans-Novak stated: "To accept Bayh's clearly loaded testimony in favor of the treaty is tantamount to voting blind, a condition that someday could return to haunt the Senate."